UNITARIAN MONTHLY

"One God, one law, one element,
And one far-off divine event,
To which the whole creation moves!"
—*Tennyson.*

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The Birth of Jesus.

IN both hemispheres of our globe, and almost from pole to pole, the voice of thanksgiving is lifted up, for the coming of Christ unto the world.

Jesus by His birth was truly a *human being;* and in this we should rejoice. He was flesh of our flesh. He had our wants and desires, our hunger and thirst, our sensation of pleasure and pain, our natural passions. He was born of woman, was folded in a mother's arms, was nourished from a mother's breast; and He felt the gratitude, the tenderness of a son. He bore the relations of human life towards kindred neighbours and friends. He grew up amidst the labours of mortal men, ate the bread of His own earnings, and was acquainted by experience with the hardships to which the multitude of mankind are exposed. He was thus actually one of our race, a Brother of the great Human Family, and we have reason to rejoice that such a Deliverer was sent to us.

REV. W. E. CHANNING, D.D.
(Unitarian).

M.B.

Notes and News.

Commencing with the January number the Rev. Harold H. Johnson, B.A., minister of Cross Street Chapel, Manchester, and Secretary of the Social Service Union, will contribute a monthly page on Social Service matters.

In the New Year we hope to have some special information from Miss Tagart concerning Charles Dickens and his Unitarian connections.

The Editor hopes to increase the circulation of the "Unitarian Monthly" considerably during 1920, and would be glad to hear from any church members who are willing to co-operate as voluntary agents.

A review notice of Rev. Will Reason's book, "Christianity and Social Renewal," published for the Interdenominational Conference of Social Service Unions by the Student Christian Movement, price 1s. 6d., is held over for the January issue.

Dr. J. Estlin Carpenter has been giving Hibbert Lectures at Essex Hall, London, on "Theism in Mediæval India."

The Annual Meetings of the Northumberland and Durham Unitarian Christian Association were held in Newcastle October 19—20, the Annual Sermons on the Sunday being preached by the Rev. Herbert Barnes. At the meeting on Monday a resolution was carried in support of the League of Nations.

The National Unitarian Temperance Asssociation held a Conference of Ministers and Sunday School workers at Essex Hall, London, Nov. 3rd, on "The Relation of Alcohol to Social and Religious Work."

The Rev. Edward Morgan, B.A., of Unity Church, Bolton, has been elected President of the Bolton Nonconformist Ministers' Association.

The United Service of the East London Unitarian Churches was held at the new Gravel Pit Chapel, Hackney, Oct. 18th, and public meeting followed with discussion of "The Present Opportunity of Liberal Religion."

At Blackley the Unitarian exchanged pulpit with a Congregational minister for evening service recently.

Mr. Austin Hopkinson, M.P., gave the address at evening service at the Mossley Unitarian Chapel, Oct. 19th.

Rev. G. W. Thompson, of Portsmouth, has reported well of the Unitarian Churches in S.E. Wales after his missionary visitation amongst them.

The Women's League of Liverpool and District has held a united meeting of the girls of the Unitarian Churches, Oct. 11th.

The Rev. Dr. Mellone has been giving a series of lectures to Teachers of Sunday School Unions under the auspices of the Northern Sunday School Federation, upon "Sunday School Problems."

There is a distinct revival of strength at Cross Street Chapel, Manchester, under the new ministry of the Rev. H. H. Johnson, B.A., who secures attendances at evening services approaching 300.

The Lewisham Unitarian Church was crowded Oct. 26th to hear Miss Maude Royden of the City Temple.

The Rev. Henry Gow, B.A., of Hampstead, who has been the preacher for "The American Unitarian General Conference," has had the degree of D.D. conferred upon him by the Meadville Theological School, Pennsylvania.

About 10,000 men went from our Unitarian Churches to the War, and fully a thousand of them died. Let us not forget.

The Lytham Road, South Shore, Unitarian Church, Blackpool, has received the gift of a fine organ from one of its members, Mr. J. J. Bowles, and oak panelling and choir stalls from Mr. F. Higham, another member. Dedication services, Oct. 23 and 26, had full attendances.

A Unitarian Mayor is elected at Oldham and at Dukinfield.

A Sale of Work by the Church of the Divine Unity, Newcastle-on-Tyne, realised £250, and a Bazaar for the Church of Our Father, Rotherham, £160.

Rev. Alexander Gordon, M.A., gave an eloquent address at Unity Church, Islington, London, Nov. 1st, on "Arians at Carter Lane."

Mr. and Mrs. Arthur Dufton, as a thank-offering for the close of the war, are generously bearing the cost of installation of electric light in the Plymouth Unitarian Church.

Mr. J. Cuming Walters, M.A., Editor of "The Manchester City News," delivered the address at evening service in the Blackley Unitarian Chapel to a large congregation, Oct. 25th.

At the Autumnal Meeting of the British and Foreign Unitarian Association at Essex Hall, London, Nov. 5th, Rev. C. J. Street, M.A., LL.B., most earnestly pleaded for £250 as the minimum salary for ministers, which is hardly equal to £150 pre-war.

Rev. Lawrence Scott, of Denton, has completed 40 years in the ministry.

About £5,300 has been promised in response to the appeal for the Florence Nightingale Memorial Home for Men at Great Hucklow towards the £10,000 needed.

"The Expository Times" says that "for the fundamental things of apologetic go to a scholarly Unitarian. For an exposition of the doctrine of God, for a defence of the theistic against the materialistic interpretation of the Universe go to the Rev. Sydney Herbert Mellone, M.A., D.Sc."; and further that "Dr. Mellone has the calm courage of the scholar; he has the sure touch of the literary artist." A well-merited tribute.

CHRISTMAS.

A thousand years have come and gone,
  And near a thousand more,
Since happier light from heaven shone
  Than ever shone before;
And in the hearts of old and young
  A joy most joyful stirred,
That sent such news from tongue to tongue
  As ears had never heard.

And we are glad, and we will sing,
  As in the days of yore:
Come all, and hearts made ready bring
  To welcome back once more
The day, when first on wintry earth
  A summer change began,
And dawning in a lowly birth
  Uprose the light of man!

—T. T. LYNCH.

THE CHRIST-MYTH THEORY.

THE Rev. Dr. Carpenter, ex-Principal of Manchester College, Oxford, who wrote some time ago from the point of view of the believer in the historicity of Jesus, a book—"The Historical Jesus and the Theological Christ"—some time ago sent to the Rev. H. Dawtrey for publication his opinion of the recent controversy.

Dear Mr. Dawtrey,—You ask me for a few words on the view which Dr. Anderson has again recently advocated, to the effect that the central figure of the New Testament is not historical Taken in the strict sense, that statement is no doubt perfectly true The different representations of Jesus in the Synoptic Gospels, the letters of the Apostle Paul, and the Johannine writings, cannot be combined into one single personality who actually lived and taught in Galilee about A.D. 30.

But that is a very different thing from saying that there was no such person as Jesus Christ, and that all the stories about him are only symbols.

In this matter the testimony of the Apostle Paul is of the utmost importance. No one who accepts the Apostle's letters—and Dr. Anderson apparently does so—can legitimately refuse to believe in the reality of Jesus, for Paul tells the Galatians that a few years after his death he had seen his brother James in Jerusalem, while he was staying a fortnight with Peter (Gal. i., 18, 19). We are assured, indeed, that there could have been no such teacher, because the Apostle says nothing about his teachings. It must be remembered, however, that most of the Pauline letters were called out by special difficulties or incidents in the Churches to which the Apostle had already preached. Even to the Romans, to whom he was not personally known, he alludes (vi 17) to the "form of teaching" which they had already received; and in writing to other Churches, he quotes from current traditions (cp. I Cor. xi. 2, 23, xv. 3, 2 Thess. ii. 15), which certainly included some of what were believed to be the Teacher's own words.

But we are told that "the essence of the Apostolic preaching is the worship of the One God under the aspect or character or person of Jesus." How any careful student can interpret the Pauline letters in that sense, I do not understand. One after another of these communications opens with a salutation invoking "Grace and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ." We hear of "the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ," and even of "the God of our Lord Jesus Christ" (Eph. i., 3, 17). We are told that "there is One God, the Father . . . and One Lord Jesus Christ"; and when the great world drama reaches its climax, the Son will himself become subject to him who had previously installed him in temporary sovereignty, that God may be all in all (1 Cor. viii., 6, xv. 28). How is it possible to confound two personalities thus kept invariably apart? And why should Dr. Anderson ignore the fact that though the Apostle Paul apparently believed that Jesus had lived in glory as the Son of God in the world above, he nevertheless makes him parallel with Adam as the inaugurator of a spiritual humanity, and calls him "the Second Man" from heaven (1 Cor xv. 47).

Those who deny the historical reality of Jesus are further confronted with the difficulty of accounting for the homely circumstances of his story. How was he fitted up with family relations, a father and mother and four brothers (all named) and sisters, besides, and located in a hill-village like Nazareth? What teller of myths would have described his Deity as consorting with all sorts of people outside the pale of respectability, dining with the out-caste tax-gatherer, and generally behaving in such a way that his mother and brothers thought him mad? Here are the traits of an actual personality, with genius enough to utter words stamped with a force and beauty, in which the world has recognised a challenge and an appeal struck from a soul so lofty that it did not seem incongruous to worship it as God. Much of this was actually recorded, it would seem, in the lifetime of some of his most intimate friends and followers. Whatever difficulties may beset the student who seeks to ascertain the facts of the word and work of Christ, just as he would of Gotama the Buddha, they are small compared with the colossal task of accounting for the Gospels without a real Jesus of Nazareth.—Yours truly,

J. ESTLIN CARPENTER.

A Christmas Surprise.

HAROLD NORMAN was by trade an electrician, but was taken away from his work to join the army. And not only from his daily occupation was he missed, but from all his other interests. At home he was the liveliest and brightest member of the household, always cheerful, ever ready with a smile, and often with a song on his lips. His parents and brothers and sisters were sad when he departed from them. He was an active worker in the Sunday School and Chapel, filling various offices of usefulness, and both chapel and school felt much the poorer when he went.

But there was one who sorrowed at his going more keenly than any ; one who was dearer than a sister—Nora Sexton. She was Harold's sweetheart. The parting of these two lovers was the hardest of all, even harder than that between mother and son.

In due time after his training Harold was sent to Mesopotamia. He was in several actions there, but wrote home cheerfully saying that he was quite all right.

In one of his letters he told of his capture of an Arab prisoner who spoke English. This Arab said that the English were idolators, that they worshipped three gods, and he ridiculed such worship. When Harold told him that this was not true of all the English the Arab was surprised. "I believe in One God only," said Harold. "I am a Unitarian. I believe that Jesus was a great and a good man."

At this the Arab seemed greatly pleased. But he was passed over into some other care, and Harold saw no more of him at that time. He heard later that he and some other prisoners escaped one night, and got clear away.

At home they looked eagerly for letters. Nora pined for them more than anybody. She received them regularly, for a time. They were like bread and meat to her. She seemed to live on them. But later the letters ceased. Week after week passed by, and no letters came. Harold's parents and Nora were most anxious and worried, wondering what had happened. Had he been wounded? Had he been taken prisoner? And worse still—Had he been killed?

More weeks went, and no news. Mr. Norman wrote to the War Office making inquiries, and the only reply he received was an acknowledgment. They worried their hearts out in anxiety, doubt, and foreboding.

"It will break my heart if the lad is lost!" exclaimed Mrs. Norman.

"It will kill me, if he is killed," cried Nora.

The weeks passed into months, and still they heard nothing. And then one day a letter came from the War Office saying that he was reported to be "missing," and that it was quite possible that he was a prisoner of war.

This suggestion that he was a prisoner gave them hope, and they hoped on. But the fear was always in their minds and weighing upon their hearts.

Then later came a letter from the War Office to the effect that as all the prisoners taken by the enemy were accounted for, and that there was no Harold Norman among them, it was feared that he must be reckoned amongst the killed.

This plunged the family into the deeper depths of sorrow and mourning, and Nora fretted and was quite heart-broken. But Mrs. Norman refused to give up the hope that her boy was still alive.

Christmas drew nigh. "This will be a sad Christmas for the Norman family," said the neighbours. And it was in sadness that the festive season came upon them. On Christmas Eve they sat round the fire, and Nora with them, all thinking about Harold.

"He was a good lad," said Mr. Norman.

"He was—both at home and at chapel," said his mother. "He was always ready to give me a helping hand. And at school, how well he played the harmonium; how thoroughly he acted as school secretary. Wasn't I proud that day before the War when he said a few words from the Unitarian Van in support of our Unitarian Faith. Ah, I think we shall see him yet."

"Oh, mother, I do like to hear you say that," said Nora. "That hope is our only comfort. May God protect him and bring him safely home!"

Christmas morning came. Nora was invited to join in the Christmas dinner. Just before the dinner Mr. Norman said: "A happy Christmas to our boy, if only he is alive!"

A knock came at the door. Nora opened it, and there was the postman with a telegram. She feared bad news. Mr. Norman opened it.

"What? Harold is alive, thank God! He is coming home. This message says: 'Hope to be home Christmas day—Harold.' Hurrah!"

They were all excited. "Why, he is coming to-day, then," said Nora, her eyes sparkling with a new-found joy. "Mother; why are you so quiet? Aren't you glad?"

"Oh, yes, I'm glad if only it be true. It seems only too good to be true, and I can hardly realise it after all the weary waiting. I hope it is true, for I want my lad."

In the midst of their talk the door opened, and there in the doorway stood Harold. His mother and Nora rushed to him with exclamations of surprise, and embraced and kissed him. But they saw that he did not look well. Father and son clasped hands.

"God be thanked, lad, that we see you alive," said Mr. Norman. "We've not heard from you for months, and we feared you were dead."

"Not heard?" said Harold. "Why, I have written—and so my letters have not reached you. Did you get a telegram?"

"Yes, it came only a few minutes since. Until that came we knew nothing."

Harold told how he was taken prisoner along with some others; how amongst his captors was the Arab who had escaped from the British; that the prisoners were ordered to be shot; that the Arab came to him in the night and took him away and hid him; that this Arab assisted him to escape; how he reached the coast, where there were some British forces, and where he reported himself. He also told how he had to be put into a hospital for malarial fever; that he was unconscious for many days, and when well enough to be moved he was given his discharge and passed to be sent home. His letters must have been sunk with other mails in the sea.

"How is it that the War Office reported you as probably dead?" asked Mr. Norman.

"Well," said Harold, "they have confounded me with another young fellow named Harry Norman, who was killed. I suppose that is it."

It was a day of rejoicing for the Norman family, and for Nora. He joined in the Christmas dinner. He had been travelling all night to reach home, and the telegram he sent must have been delayed.

A few days after Harold and Nora were talking together, and the upshot of it was that he said:

"We have fixed the wedding day."

For the Children.

By Rev. H. FISHER SHORT.

FATHER AND MOTHER CHRISTMAS.

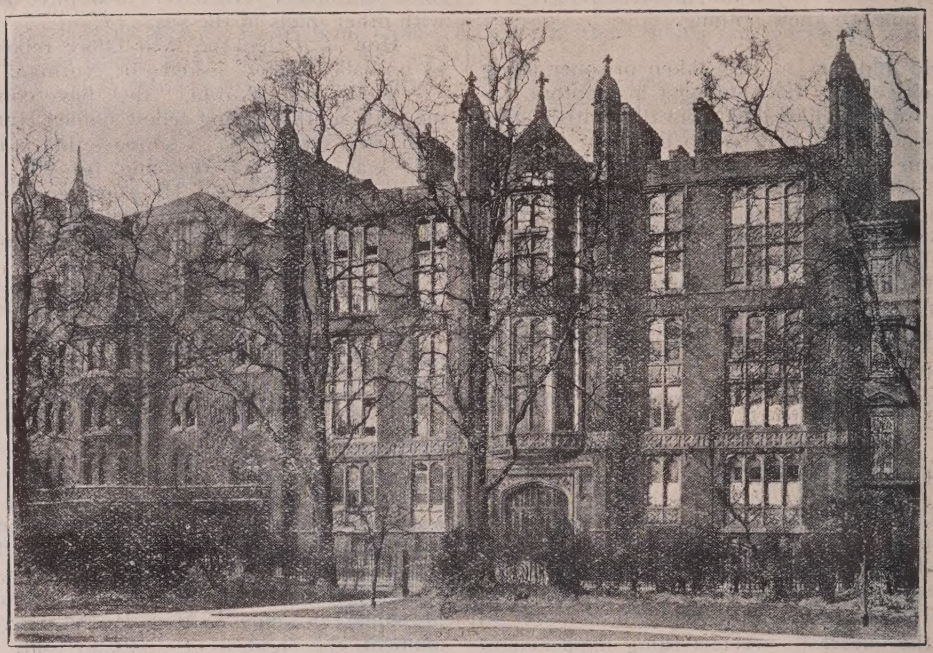
"BILLIE and Molly and Topsy and Ted
Snuggled down comfily cosy in bed;
Each little heart held a dream of delight,
For each little head knew 'twas Christmas Eve night."

And the queerest, sweetest thing happened to them as they occupied the four corners of the earth, as they called the four corners of the big bedroom occupied by their four little beds. Suspended from each cot was a stocking—a big, long one, borrowed from Mother or Father, that would hold a decent number of the toys and sweets and things their hearts so furiously desired. Baby Billie missed the wonderful happening; for, try as he might, he could not resist the wooing call of the sleep fairy. The other three were much too excited fully to yield to that little lady's spell. Though they were tired, their slumbers were fitful and broken. And so it fell out that, at the psychological moment—big word that, but found in any respectable dictionary—they all happened to be awake together; that is, they were awake rather less than more. Not a word was exchanged, but three pairs of heavy-lidded eyes were attracted to the quick opening door. Wrapped in soft light, two figures entered silently. The first had a beard, and wore a long robe, and both carried armfuls of good things. "Father Christmas!" gasped Topsy inside her thinking box. Topsy was four and a half. "But who is the lady? I didn't know there was a Mother Christmas; but it is Mother Christmas, I s'pose." To Molly the figures appeared to be too young to be Father Christmas and his wife. Also, she was struck by a certain tenderness in their faces. "That isn't old Santa," she whispered to herself. "I believe it is the gentle Jesus. But the sweet lady, who is she? Yes, yes, it's—it's Mary mother mild; I'm sure it is." And her little heart glowed within her as she gazed at the wonderful visitors. Ted, who was a big, strapping fellow of eight and the eldest, received a different impression. His first thought was of Father Christmas; but in a second, that thought was ousted by another. "That brown beard and bushy hair look very like Daddie's, and that long robe looks like Dad's dressing gown. It is Daddie! And that pretty lady is Mummie; only Mummie can smile in that lovely way." That moment the light went suddenly out, and the radiant visitors vanished into the darkness. Soon the heavy eye-lids fell down like blinds before the windows of the soul, and the three weary little folk sank into real sleep.

With the first streak of dawn on Christmas Day four plump little figures tumbled out of bed, and with a wild shriek pounced upon the fat, bulgy stockings. What a burning, joyous moment! The horn of plenty wasn't in it. Every dream had come more than true. Gathering up their treasures in their arms they made a wild, noisy rush for mother's and father's bedroom. "See what Faver Clismas has brought me," shouted Baby Billie. "Oh, how nice of him," said Mother as she looked at the pile of pretty things Billie spread before her. "Yes, I saw him, and Mother Christmas, too," said Topsy. Father roared at this, and glanced at Mother. "And I saw them," said Mollie rather quietly; "but they were much too young for old Santa and his wife. I believe it was the gentle Jesus and Mary Mother mild." This time mother laughed, but, oh, so sweetly, and looked at Father, who seemed a bit uncomfortable. And, then, Ted jumped on the bed, threw his arms round their necks, and whispered, "Thank you dear Daddie Christmas, and dear, dear Mummie Christmas!" Father gave him a big hug, and Mother added a kiss, and so began one of the merriest, maddest, sweetest, tenderest Christmas Days they had ever known.

NOTA BENE.

"WHEN we welcome a minister, we make an agreement with him to preach to us, but we undertake to be there for him to preach to." These words were used at a Sheffield meeting.



Dr. Williams' Library.

Dr. Williams' Library, Gordon Square, London, is probably the most important, as it is the most ancient, Nonconformist Library in the kingdom. It is not a Unitarian foundation, neither is it now administered for the benefit of Unitarians, yet Unitarians may claim a special interest in it, because, like many of the old chapels whose members are now Unitarian, Dr. Williams' Trust has come down, by historic descent with no breach of continuity, and the present Trustees are all Unitarians.

The Rev. Daniel Williams, D.D., its founder, died January 26th, 1716, at Hoxton, London, aged 72. He was a leader amongst the Nonconformists of his time. He was born at or near Wrexham, and in 1662 began to preach when nineteen years of age. He was afterwards domestic chaplain to the Countess of Meath at Drogheda in Ireland, then minister of the Wood Street congregation, Dublin (1667-1687), and subsequently settled in London as minister of the Presbyterian congregation, Hand Alley, Bishopgate. He was warmly welcomed amongst the dissenting ministers of London, and preached before the Lord Mayor, December, 1687. He at once stepped into the place of leader amongst the Dissenters, and continued such till his death. He was a man of clear judgment and strong common sense, a man of affairs more than a theologian, though he became conspicuous in theological controversies. His chief quality as controversialist consisted in a certain downright strength and tenacity which served him well in a fight. He was suspected as being unorthodox in his views, but in all his disputes he succeeded in triumphantly repelling the attacks of his opponents.

In 1709 the Universities of Edinburgh and Glasgow each conferred upon him the degree of D.D. In 1702 he was chosen to present the address of the Three Denominations to Queen Anne on her accession. He was the foremost champion of the threatened Nonconformist position all through that monarch's reign.

Dr. Williams was a man of ample fortune, possessing estates in Denbighshire, in Essex and Suffolk, in London and Westminster, consisting of farms and houses. By his will, after certain other bequests, he left his estates, not otherwise disposed of, to twenty-three Trustees, the income of the Trust to be applied in maintaining schools or paying teachers, in the distribution of Bibles, catechisms and good, practical books to the poor, in grants of money to widows of ministers and to ministers, in binding apprentices, in the training of students for the ministry, in maintaining educated persons of sound judgment and sober principles to preach the Word of God in Wales, and in the establishment and maintenance of a public library.

Amongst the objects now supported by the Trust are university scholarships for students preparing for the ministry, and the maintenance of a girls' high school at Dolgelly, which is known as 'Dr. Williams' School,' taking high rank among the Secondary Schools in Wales, and always attracts a considerable number of pupils

from England. The curriculum includes preparation for entrance to universities, and leaving exhibitions are available to be held at any University. The school is under the management of thirteen Governors, five of them appointed by Dr. Williams' Trustees.

The Library began with the collection Dr. Williams left, to be used for a public library with the addition of books given by other persons from time to time, the Founder's will providing that a suitable building be secured for the custody of the books and for the appointment of a paid librarian. A building was erected in Red Cross Street, and opened to the public in 1729. The Trustees at a later time established a custom that every lay Trustee on election should give a donation of £10 for the purchase of books, and many of the clerical Trustees made handsome bequests from their own libraries. For a long time the library was not greatly used by the public. Starting with a collection of about ten thousand volumes it had increased to less than seventeen thousand volumes a century later. But the income of the Trust largely increased, and the Court of Chancery authorised the application of funds to the purchase of books.

In 1865 the Metropolitan Railway Co. purchased the library building in Red Cross Street, which necessitated removal. For the next eight years the Library was housed at 8, Queen's Square, Bloomsbury, and in 1873 it was removed to a new building in Grafton Street. In the next twelve years the number of readers had reached to over 4,000 per annum. In 1885 the Rev. F. H. Jones, B.A., became Librarian, continuing till 1914. It was during his tenure in 1890 that a further removal of the Library took place. Messrs. Maple and Co. desired to acquire the Grafton Street building for their business, and the chance occurred when University Hall came into the market on the removal of Manchester New College to Oxford. The Dr. Williams' Trustees purchased it, and the building could not have been transferred to more appropriate hands. It was first built as a hall of residence for students at University College, in the middle of last century, shared after 1853 by Manchester New College, and subsequently transferred to the Trustees of that College. It was founded in commemoration of the passing of the Dissenters' Chapels Bill, and stands as a memorial of the same struggle for civil and religious liberty with which Dr. Williams' Trust has always been identified.

University Hall accommodates all the uses of library, reading-room, offices for the general administration of the Trust, room available for meetings of the Trust, and such as those of the Presbyterian Fund, Hibbert Trust, Sustentation Fund, etc., and for other public meetings. The Library is a lending library, the use of which is free to scholars and students. Its readers are not merely in London, but are found all over the British Isles, to whom books are regularly sent; and before the War books were frequently sent to readers on the Continent. Ministers in country places far from a public library find this a great boon. All that the reader has to do is to pay carriage of his parcel each way, and a fine if the books are kept beyond the time allowed. Any person of eighteen years of age and upwards is eligible on the recommendation of two approved guarantors. The ordinary reader is allowed three volumes for one month. Students doing special research are granted extensions of time and number of books, when possible, on application to the Librarian. In the first ten years of Mr. Jones's tenure of office the parcels sent out increased threefold—from 583 to 1,705 per annum—and when he retired (1914) had risen to 6,896. There are now over 70,000 volumes, with an annual issue of 22,000, and there is accommodation for probably a million in anticipation of increasing accumulation. The Library is now by far the largest department of the Trust. The annual allowance of £600 for the purchase of books and for binding makes possible a good supply of the best current literature. The collections include many rare volumes and manuscripts. Considerable additions have been acquired by occasional benefactions, such as the Walton Theosophical Library of 1,000 volumes, and about 2,500 volumes from the library of George Henry Lewes, and 500 volumes from the Fanshawe family.

The present Librarian, Rev. R. Travers Herford, B.A., was appointed July, 1914. He has seen considerable service as Unitarian minister in Lancashire, settled at Stand, near Whitefield, Manchester, from 1885 to 1914. He graduated at London University, 1880; was at Manchester New College, 1880-3; Hibbert Scholar, Leyden, 1883-4; and is a Hebraist of high repute. He is a nephew of the late Rev. Brooke Herford, D.D., and brother of Professor C. H. Herford, Litt.D., of Manchester University. Dr. Williams' Library could not have a man more fit for the position he occupies. Mr. Herford is also the secretary for the Trust. He is assisted in the work of the Library by the sub-Librarian, Mr. Stephen K. Jones, B.A. Mr. Herford has also had charge of the Sunday services of the Peckham Unitarian Church from 1916.

(The particulars given above are almost entirely drawn from the Bicentenary volume published by direction of the Trustees, entitled "A Short Account of the Charity and Library estab- Williams, D.D.).

The implications of the Unitarian Gospel involve the active promotion of social reform. It is a good sign of the new times that the Lindsey Press has begun the series of publications on "Social Questions." If others of the series keep up to the quality of the first they will all be of great value towards reconstruction in the churches and the Christianisation of Society.

Literature.

"THE Methodist Unitarian Movement," by H. McLachlan, M.A., B.D., 4s. 6d. (postage 4d.). The University Press, 12, Lime Grove, Oxford Road, Manchester; or Longman's, Green and Co., London.

It is a good sign that this book by Rev. H. McLachlan, Warden of the Unitarian Home Missionary College, Manchester, is issued as one of the publications of the University of Manchester, No. XXXIII. of its Historical Series. This is not the first volume of Unitarian history published under the same auspices. The Methodist Unitarian Movement is a subject of considerable interest to the Unitarians of North-East Lancashire, where the several thriving churches sprung from it exist. In this book Mr. McLachlan has given a very instructive and readable account of its origin and development. It is a story which is sure to possess no little fascination for those who have the opportunity of reading it. The author's manner of telling his tale is admirable. He is anything but wordy. He relates what there is to know with conciseness and yet with a clearness of narrative that makes everything plain. Here we have the fullest account of the career of the Rev. Joseph Cooke, the Methodist founder of the Movement, the particulars gathered from all available sources; also a chapter on his immediate followers—the Cookites—with accounts of his principal preachers, including John Ashworth, of Newchurch; James Pollard and John Robinson, of Padiham; James Taylor and James Wilkinson, of Rochdale; and others. We are told how the Cookites discovered themselves to be Unitarians,, and of their joining up with the Unitarian body; how the Methodist constitution of the Movement became changed into Independency; and of the appointment of trained resident ministers after the Cookite preachers passed away.

The story is briefly this: Joseph Cooke, a young Wesleyan minister stationed in Rochdale, with popular gifts as a preacher, was charged with heresy by the Wesleyan Conference, and removed to Sunderland, and a year later expelled from that body on doctrinal grounds (1806). His many followers in Rochdale rallied round him, and Providence Chapel was there erected for him within a year of his expulsion, with accommodation for seven hundred people. He drew large congregations; groups of his followers—at Newchurch in Rossendale, at Padiham, Todmorden, and other places—formed themselves into Cookite societies. Cooke died of consumption in March, 1811, at the early age of 35. From his movement sprang the churches at Newchurch, Padiham, Rawtenstall, Rochdale (Clover Street), and Todmorden. In 1815 there were eleven preaching stations, and about that time the movement became Unitarian.

Mr. McLachlan's pages shed considerable light upon the social conditions in which these Methodist Unitarians lived and worked. One chapter is devoted to the consideration of their "Social and Political Ideals." They were most of them Chartists and political reformers. John Fielden, of Todmorden, who became M.P. for Oldham, and prominent in the Parliamentary struggle for factory legislation, was one of them. Though himself a manufacturer he published "The Curse of the Factory System." It was he who moved the second reading of the Ten Hours' Bill in the House of Commons, February, 1847, when it was carried. But he told a meeting of manufacturers that "eight hours per day in factories" was long enough for children or adults. At least half of the "original twenty-eight" originators of the Co-operative movement were members of the Clover Street Chapel, Rochdale. These facts indicate clearly the radicalism of the Methodist Unitarians. Incidentally Mr. McLachlan gives the histories of their churches and accounts of their prominent people. There is a chapter on their "Sunday Schools," and there is a very good Bibliography, and a good detailed Index at the end.

It would be difficult to find a book anywhere more packed full of interest—especially to Unitarians. It is remarkable how free the pages are from typographical errors. But "Tom Bobbin," p. 137, should be "Tim Bobbin"; and on p. 109, line 6, "last decade" evidently requires another word instead of "last." These trifles apart, Mr. McLachlan has produced a valuable piece of historical work, done in scholarly and good workmanlike style, and we most warmly commend it to our readers.

"The Truth of Christianity," by Lt.-Col. W. H. Turton, D.S.O. Ninth Edition, 40th thousand, carefully revised. Wells, Gardner, Darton, and Co., Ltd., 3 and 4, Paternoster Buildings, London, E.C. 2s. net.

This book in an earlier edition has already been noticed in the "Unitarian Monthly." But it is now issued after having been carefully revised. It has been translated into Japanese, Chinese, Italian, and Arabic. The author is a Trinitarian, and makes a very good presentment of arguments for and against Christianity from that point of view. He writes in a clear and readable style, and though Unitarians place little value on arguments from miracles and on much else which this volume contains, there is also much information and collected evidences that can make profitable reading for them. Unitarianism is mentioned only once, and that in reference to the doctrine of the Trinity (228), where it is declared that the "doctrine of Three Divine Persons is less difficult to believe than the Unitarian doctrine of only ONE." If so how is it that there are any Uni-

tarians at all? The author defines "Christianity" to mean "the doctrines contained in the Three Creeds." This of itself indicates where the writer stands. But it has to be said that he presents his views and arguments in a manner absolutely free from any manifestation of bad feeling against those from whom he differs. There is no denunciation of Unitarians, nor of agnostics. The 500 pages contain almost every conceivable argument for his view of Christianity, and the book has evidently been made of great use for Trinitarian propaganda. We wish every orthodox advocate were as free from bitterness.

The Thorns Sprang up and Choked it.

These words have become so familiar to many of us that we read without thinking seriously over them. The very simplicity of the phrase may make us think how common-place is the thought of thorns growing up in a neglected patch of ground and rendering it useless. Simple, yet vigorous and real, is this thought and true to life in our own day.

These words came with a new meaning to the writer as he read a book on "Boy-life and Labour" recently. The old Gospel words seemed to leap suddenly from the page. The author was dealing with the many influences which affect a boy's life for evil, create wrong tendencies, sow seeds of bad habits—in short, like thorns choke the good. But just let us think how in many ways in the life of the individual, of a church, of society, there grow up the thorns which stifle the word of life; the good purposes fellowship and reform. And we are inclined to cry out that the world seems out-of-joint with its Creator.

Take the specific case of a boy's life. Let us take note of the social forces at work around him. First, there are industrial conditions, which tire him out just at that period when he is most receptive and capable of development. How many thousands of lads work at employment where they learn nothing and which gives no aim or purpose to life. A reaction against mechanical toil means a desire for excitement. So there comes the football match, the picture house, the music hall, literature of the "dreadful" description. And this, with the utter lack of anything like healthy or formulative influences for good, means in the long run, degeneration. Now, none of these amusements by themselves might affect a person who occasionally resorted to them for relaxation, but week after week and year after year these influences play the mischief with lives of many of our lads.

What do these influences do? The grind of drab toil unrelieved by the redeeming qualities of life, the pantomime and caricature of the cheap music hall, the tawdry glitter of the cinema, the sensational adventures of "Snake" and the great detective, feed the emotions with unnatural excitement, while all the finer forces are dying for lack of nourishment. So all the possibilities and potentialities of the boy's life, his idealism, ambition, intellectual curiosity and religious instincts, become choked—"the thorns sprang up and choked it." It is clear then, that a great case can be made out for reform. There is a crying need to give to young life of our country, sacrificed so prodigally to the god Mammon, a greater and better opportunity. And there is also a need that the Word of Life be made clear and simple in our Sunday Schools, so that there may grow the seeds of discipleship which have within them the potencies of a higher citizenship towards the Kingdom of God.

So we all need to examine our hearts lest in our case also it be said "The thorns sprang up and choked it." —C.S.

December.

By Rev. WILLIAM C. HALL, M.A.

WITH the last month of the year we come to the end of our brief notes on the origin of the names of the months. December, as our readers already have gathered, means "ten-time," this month being the tenth of the old Roman calendar.

Our Saxon forefathers—to whom we now admit our obligations and pay our thanks, for helping us to expand these notes—called it "winter-monat," and "mid-winter-monat," and "giul erra," by which was meant the former, or first, "giul." We are told that the feast of Thor, which was celebrated at the winter solstice, was called "giul" from "iol" or "ol," which signified "ale," and is now corrupted into "yale." This intoxicating etymology is doubtful. It is more probable that the term "giul" is our word "wheel," and that "the Yule festival received its name from its being the turning point of the year, or period at which the fiery orb of day made a revolution in his annual circuit, and entered on his northern journey. A confirmation of this view is afforded by the circumstance that, in the old clog almanacs, a wheel is the device employed for marking the season of Yule-tide."

On the introduction of Christianity the month was called "helig-mont," holy month, out of devotion to the birth-time of Christ. Modern Saxons know it as Christmas-month.

That man's perfection is the crowning flower,
Towards which the urgent sap in life's great tree
Is pressing,—seen in puny blossoms now,
But in the world's great morrows to expand
With broadest petal and with deepest glow."
—George Eliot. "A Minor Prophet."

National Unitarian Temperance Association.

Where There's Danger.

WE hoped during the War that the Nation and the Government were taking to heart the lesson that Drinking is a national danger. We were still more hopeful when the restrictions upon the sale of intoxicants produced such overwhelming testimony in condemnation of the unlimited use of liquors, and we said that no harm was done, but rather good to the community by Government Control. The danger now is that under the sense of relief derived from the cessation of hostilities we fall back into the old attitude of indifference. We are allowing the brewers to regain control of the Government, and direct the sale of strong drink so as to increase the sale, and also increase profits.. We are withdrawing control from those special areas where War munitions were produced, and which proved beneficial not only to the workers, but to the inhabitants at large. Surely if the restrictions were so necessary and beneficial during the war, they should be continued during peace. The same urgency to increase production is urged by Statesmen ; then should there not also be the advantages for building up the resources of the nation, for repairing the damage, for reconstruction of industrial life?

We are now in the Christmas month. We are at liberty to promote the customs of the festive season as never before during the last five years. With the ratification of Peace there will be cause for great rejoicing, and depend upon it advantage will be taken of the opportunity to indulge in excessive drinking, in order, as erroneously assumed, to increase the spirit of good fellowship and hilarity. Public banquets, parties, and the customary treating of friends meeting near a place where drink is obtainable will no doubt, unless we realise the danger and try to prevent it, increase the victims of intemperance. Our young people are coming home from College and School ; we shall be visiting old friends whom we have not seen for years ; we shall be giving a right good welcome to our lads and girls who have been released from the army. We shall feel that whatever we do, we cannot overdo the welcome. Such a Christmas-time as we have not had for many a year ; such jollification, such joy and gladness that once more Christmas can be real, " a time of Peace and Joy." But oh ! let us take care, keep the drink out of it ; don't let it be said that the temptation came to our loved ones from their dearest friends in our efforts to make them feel at home.

The years that have been so full of strain and stress for us all have left their mark, that run-down condition, that soon-tired feeling, and we resort to tonics and pick-me-ups. The advertised medicated wines, so alluring and enticing—" the world's greatest tonic, restorative, blood-maker, and nerve food," says one. What lies ! How can anything containing 20 per cent of alcohol be called a brain food ; it is a nerve depressant and irritant. Besides the danger ! The young mother, the worn-out worker, are the victims. The exhilarating effect after a dose of the so-called meat wines creates its own appetite, produces the craving for alcohol, and will have it, and in this disguised form it is so plausible, and so easily obtained—until too late, excessive doses, intoxication, the confirmed habit, degradation, and death. Oh ! beware, where there's Drink there's Danger. R.N.

MINISTERIAL CHANGES: Rev. Mortimer Rowe, B.A., has accepted appointment to Chowbent Chapel as colleague to Rev. J. J. Wright, who is now minister emeritus, and Mr. Rowe has resigned at Preston ; Rev. J. Morgan Whiteman has been appointed minister at Gainsborough, and has been welcomed and commenced duty there in succession to Rev. W. R. Clarke-Lewis, who has been welcomed to the ministry of the Newport Chapel, I.W. ; Rev. W. S. McLauchlan, M.A., has resigned at Swinton ; Rev. C. P. Scott, inducted to ministry, Unitarian Church, Ashton-under-Lyne, Nov. 1st ; Rev. Walter Murray, B.D., inducted and welcomed to ministry of Chesham Unitarian Church, Bury, Nov. 1st ; Rev. Percival Chalk has accepted appointment to the Evesham Unitarian Church, and resigned at Banbury ; Rev. Chas. Smith has resigned at Nelson to enter the Presbyterian Church of England ; Rev. A. G. Peaston has accepted appointment to Stannington Chapel, Sheffield, and resigned at Boston ; Rev. S. T. Pagesmith has resigned at Warwick to become minister of the Bible Christian Church, Salford.

DEATHS: Mrs. Joseph Harding, Bow, London, Oct. 21st ; Mr. Archibald Kenrick, Bournemouth, Oct. 19th, 77 ; Dame Amy Tate, widow of Sir Henry Tate, London, Oct. 18th ; Dame Violet Camilla Bowring, widow of Sir Charles Clement Bowring, J.P., Derby, Oct. 25th ; Mr. Chas. Eckersley, J.P., Tyldesley, Lancs., Oct. 27th, 85 ; Mrs. John Terry, Streatham, London, Oct. 27th, 81 ; Sir Roland K. Wilson, Bart., J.P., Oct. 29th, 79 ; Mr. E. C. Abbott, Holborn, London, Nov. 2nd ; Miss Florence Davenport Hill, Oxford, Nov. 2nd, 90 ; Mr. J. L. Pearse, Plymouth, Nov. 2nd, 70 ; Mrs. C. J. Agate, Llandudno, Nov. 7th ; Mrs. A. Bideleux, London, Nov. 11th, 79 ; Mr. W. M. Crompton, Monton, Manchester, Nov. 7th, 89 ; Miss E. A. Holmes, Hull, Nov. 13th ; Mrs. Frank S. Johnson, Stockport, Nov. 15th, 47.

The Annual Meetings of the Yorkshire Unitarian Union were held at Leeds, Nov. 8th, when speakers discussed "Our Part in the New World."

Rev. W. H. Drummond has returned from his visit to the Hungarian Unitarian Churches, where at Kolosvar he took part in a Unitarian service attended by 1,200 persons, presided over by the Unitarian Bishop Ferenz.

The 55th Annual Meeting of the North Midland Association of Unitarian Churches was held at Derby, Oct. 28th, when the great urgency of increasing the ministerial stipends was discussed.

The Bolton District Sunday School Union Annual Meeting was held at Chowbent, Nov. 1st, when the principal topic was the effect of the war on the Sunday School.

The Sunday School Association held its Autumn Conference and Public Meeting at Essex Hall, London, Nov. 15th, when the attendances were small. The new Editor of the "Sunday School Monthly," Rev. T. M. Falconer, B.Litt., of Hull, spoke on "Systematic Instruction in Sunday School."

The attack on Mr. "Pussyfoot" Johnson, at Essex Hall, London, resulted in a few pounds damage to furniture.

November 22nd was the centenary of the birth of George Eliot, whose orthodox views of religion were changed by contact with friends of Unitarian connection.

Rev. B. C. Constable, Unitarian, of South Shore, Blackpool, was preacher at a Congregational Church, South Shore, on Mayor's Sunday.

There is a Joint Conference of Unitarian Societies, Dec. 1st, to consider the crisis concerning ministerial stipends.

The Trafalgar Street Unitarian Church, Burnley, has given a public welcome to its demobilised men and placed a memorial tablet on the church walls to the seven men who were killed in the war.

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(2) THE UNITY of MAN, all men being members one of another, dependent on each other, in each other's keeping, made to be ONE HUMANITY, and designed for universal brotherhood.

(3) THE UNITY OF MAN WITH GOD in one divine nature, man being the child of God, a partaker of the divine spirit, made to become perfect as God is perfect, and is essentially good and not naturally evil.

(4) THE UNITY OF LIFE here and hereafter, in one continued discipline, education and progress upward and onward for ever, man being immortal as God is immortal, and destined for the perfect life.

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